

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses with associated parking,
following demolition of existing barn

at

Barn East Of Abbotsview, Northfleet Green Road, Gravesend, Kent DA13 9PT

September 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application, submitted to Gravesham Borough Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA), for the erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses together with associated parking; following demolition of the existing barn on land east of Abbotsview, Northfleet Green Road, Gravesend. The application is made on behalf of the applicant and landowner; Mr R Arnold.
- 1.2 The Applicant obtained prior approval on 7th October 2021 under Class Q of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 for the conversion of the existing agricultural barn into two (semi-detached) self-contained, dwellinghouses - see **Section 3**, below. Work has commenced on site in accordance with the terms of the prior approval.
- 1.3 Further to the above, the applicant would like to alter the roof form of part of the building, which was not permissible under the terms of the prior approval process. Full planning permission is being sought for the re-development of the site with the erection of new build development comprising a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses that are proposed as an alternative to the development permitted under class Q. The existing barn would be demolished to enable the development. The proposed development is of a similar form, scale, siting, and quantum of development, albeit with alterations to the roof over part of the resultant building, the fenestration and a modest curtilage is proposed for each dwelling to improve residential amenity for future occupants. The Class Q prior approval remains extant and therefore provides a 'fallback' position in relation to the development of the site as proposed – this is an important and significant material consideration for this application and is discussed within **section 6** of this statement.
- 1.4 In addition to the provision of two high quality homes, the proposed development would enable higher sustainability credentials to be achieved for the building, provision of additional native tree and hedgerow planting, associated benefits to biodiversity enhancement, and landscaping to enhance views of the site from the surrounding area.
- 1.5 Further to the above, having regard to the prevailing planning policy context within the Local Authority area of Gravesham there is a policy presumption in place ['the tilted balance'] that requires the LPA to favourably consider planning applications for housing developments that provide a sustainable form of development, as required by paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF and in light of the urgent need to boost the supply of housing.

Contents

- 1.6 The application submission comprises:
 - The relevant application form (with ownership certificate) and fee
 - This Planning Statement;
 - Sustainability Statement, prepared by The Duncan & Graham Partnership
 - 21.035-10A | Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 - 21.035-11A | Proposed First Floor Plan
 - 21.035-12A| Proposed Elevations
 - 21.035-13A| Proposed Elevations, Block Plan & Site Plan with Landscaping Strategy
 - 21.035-14A | Location & Block Plan

- 21.035-15 | Existing Plans & Elevations
- 21.035-16A | Location Plan
- 21.035-17A | Street Elevation
- 21.035-18 | Comparison Plans & Elevations
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Marsh Environmental Consultants

1.6 At **Section 2** of this statement, we provide a description of the application site and its context.

1.7 At **Section 3** we set out details of the planning history.

1.8 At **Section 4** we provide details of the application proposal.

1.9 **Section 5** provides a summary of the main planning policy considerations relevant to the scheme.

1.10 **Section 6** identifies the principal issues and considers the principle of the development when tested against relevant planning policies and material considerations, in particular the significant weight that can be attributed to the 'fall back' position of the extant Class Q prior approval.

1.11 At **Section 8** we address more site specific and technical issues.

1.12 **Section 9** provides a summary conclusion relative to the three objectives to the provision of sustainable development.

2. Site Location and its Context

- 2.1 The Site is located on the southern side of Northfleet Green Road. The Site contains a detached L-shape barn and has a total site area of c.0.09ha.
- 2.2 The existing building is comprised of two components, the southern portion comprising a brick-built structure with roof sloping downwards from east to west. The northern portion of the barn has a pitched roof with gable ends of timber frame construction. The gabled roof is higher than the rear section of the sloped roof over the brick-built section of the building.
- 2.3 As noted within the introduction, the Applicant obtained prior approval on 7th October 2021 under Class Q of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 for the conversion of the existing agricultural barn into two (semi-detached) self-contained, dwellinghouses, this included associated external alterations which are permitted under the provisions of Class Q – see **Section 3: Planning History**, below. Work has commenced on site in accordance with the terms of the extant prior approval. In this regard the external cladding to part of the building has been removed pending replacement in accordance with the approved details.
- 2.4 There is existing vehicle access to the Site from Northfleet Green, with gated access. This leads to an area of compacted hardcore to the east of the barn used for vehicle parking. A tree/hedge boundary forms the northern edge of the site and the road frontage to Northfleet Green Road.
- 2.5 The site forms part of a cluster of development along this stretch of Northfleet Green Road. To the north of the site is an equestrian centre with stables, menage, paddocks and exercise area. There are a number of two-storey residential properties to the north and north-east that follow the alignment of Northfleet Green Road as it turns the corner towards the north – the closest being Gingerbread Cottages, The Cottages and Dawes Cottage. The Site is immediately adjoined to the west by Abbotsview, a detached chalet bungalow that backs onto the site, facing west.
- 2.6 Land surrounding the Site to the south and east comprises farmland. Several large pylons are located towards the east.



Figure 1: Application Site (outlined in red)

- 2.7 The site is well located relative to an extensive network of Public Rights of Way [PROW], a map produced by Kent County Council's PROW interactive map is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.8 Footpath NU28 leads from the bend in Northfleet Green Road to the east of the site, where it connects with a Bridleway running northwards to the A2 or southwards towards Istead Rise putting the site within c.1.5km walk of the Borough's largest second tier settlement which benefits from a wide range of local services and amenities. Bus stops are located within Broad Ditch Road and Flowerhill Way.
- 2.9 The village of Southfleet (Dartford Borough) is accessible along public footpaths NU26 and DR140; with bus stops at the end of footpath DR140 at the junction of Red Street and New Barn Road within c. 0.5km walking distance from the site. Bus routes here lead through the centre of the village and onto surrounding higher order settlements.
- 2.10 In addition to the above, the following planning parameters are relevant to the site and its location. The Site is located:
- beyond [outdated] policy defined settlement confines, within the rural area for planning purposes
 - within the designated Greenbelt
 - within the Istead Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area
 - within Groundwater Source Protection Zones 2 & 3
 - within Flood Risk Zone 1
 - within an Archaeological Notification Area
 - within the Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar Buffer

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Class Q of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (England) 2015 (GDPO) as amended, allows the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; or development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule, subject to a number of conditions.
- 3.2 Class Q prior approval was given on 7th October 2021 for the change of use and conversion of the existing barn on the site to provide 2no. three-bed dwellings, with associated operational development | LPA reference 2021 1026| See **figure 2**.
- 3.3 The dwellings permitted through the prior approval comprise:
- 1) Unit 1 a three-bedroom self-contained dwellinghouse, within the brick built, mono-pitched portion of the barn and;
 - 2) Unit 2 a three-bedroom self-contained dwellinghouse, within the larger pitched roof portion of the building.
- 3.4 The dwellings are shown to be arranged over two floors, enabled by the insertion of mezzanine floors over parts of the interior to provide a first-floor level, this also includes open voids over some areas of the ground floor living areas.

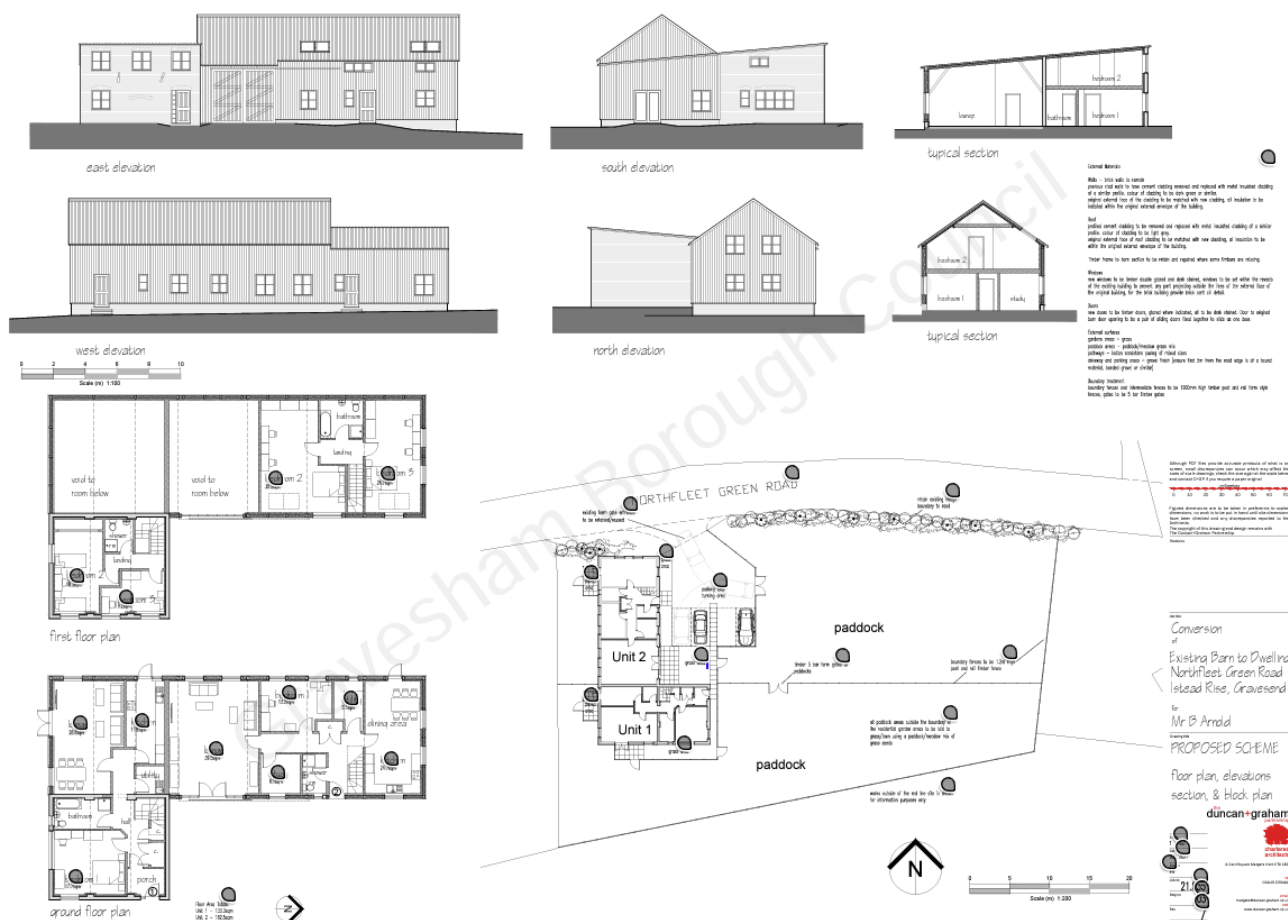


Figure 2: Approved Plan Showing Residential Conversion and Operational Development

- 3.5 External works to the existing building, approved through the Class Q conversion are described by the LPA case officer¹ as follows:

The submitted statements (Planning and Structural Condition Survey) indicate that the intention is for the brick walls to remain, and the previous cement cladding would be replaced with metal insulated cladding of a similar profile coloured in dark green.

The profiled cement cladding of the roof to be replaced with metal insulated cladding of a similar profile finished in light grey colour. All insulation to be installed within the original external envelope of the building to clad the building.

Proposed windows are to be timber double glazed and dark stained and would be set within the reveals of the existing building to avoid any projecting outside the lines of the external face of the original building.

For the brick building there would be brick cant cill detail. The doors are to be timber glazed doors dark stained as shown on the proposed drawing (Drawing No. 03). The original barn door opening to be a pair of sliding doors fixed together to slide as one.

It is considered that the design and external appearance of the building as proposed is generally acceptable. As such this matter would not trigger the requirement for prior approval but it may be relevant if prior approval is not required to seek details of materials through a planning condition. All rooms contain sufficient natural light and therefore this aspect does not trigger the requirement for prior approval.

- 3.6 The approved plans show the dwellings to be provided with a residential curtilage equivalent in area to the footprint of the existing building, a criteria of Class Q. In this case some of the curtilage area has been taken up by the access. A wider area to the east of the dwellings is shown on the approved plans as paddocks – see **figure 3** below. Vehicular access utilises the existing access point into the site, leading to a turning area and parking for four cars (two per dwelling).

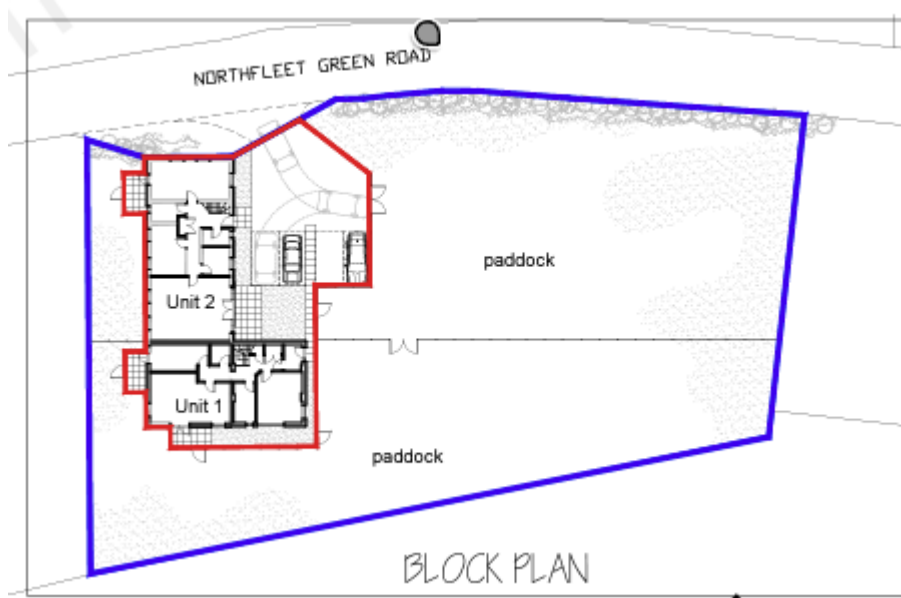


Figure 3: Prior Approval 2011026

¹ LPA delegated report, application reference 2021 1026

- 3.7 The prior approval was subject to a condition requiring the submission of a phase 1 contamination assessment. The Applicant has submitted this and the condition has subsequently been discharged. The report concluded that the risks to human health, water resources, plants and buildings and services are considered to be low in the absence of any identifiable sources of ground contamination (LPA reference 2022 1332). The Applicant has also paid the contribution towards the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS).
- 3.8 Pre-application advice was obtained by the applicant in February 2022 [20220011] in respect of a proposal for a detached, four-bedroom chalet bungalow with detached garage, following demolition of the existing barn. The proposed dwellinghouse was sited further to the east of the existing building and orientated ninety degrees to the barn, to face Northfleet Green Road. In this regard no objection was raised to the design of the proposed dwelling, however concern was expressed that due to their siting, the two buildings would result in a more dispersed form of development across the site. In addition, the height of the proposed dwelling, which would have been greater than that of the existing building, was considered to diminish the openness of the Green Belt. Concern was also expressed in this regard to the extent of the residential curtilage and hardstand proposed.

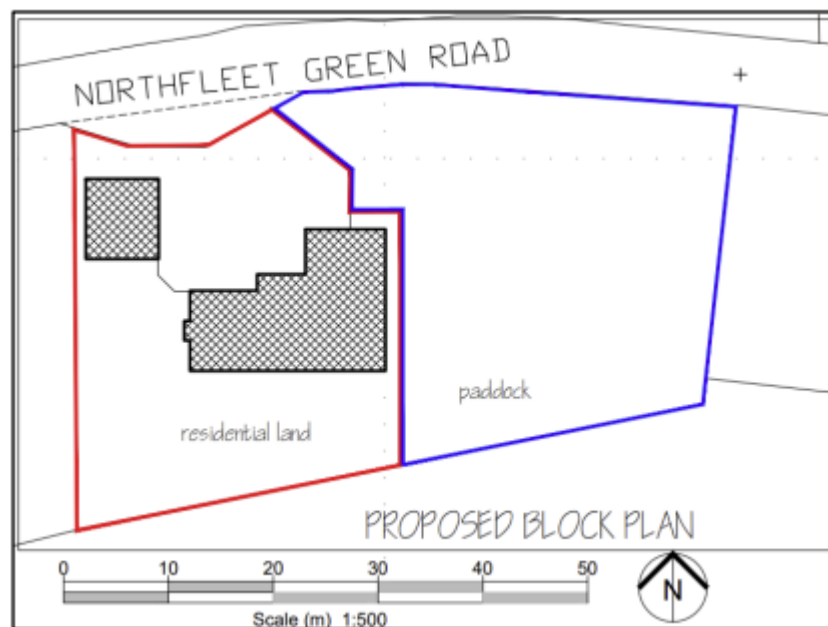


Figure 4: Proposed Site Plan – Pre-Application Enquiry 20220011

- 3.9 Notwithstanding the above, the officer concluded that the proposal would, not have an adverse impact on the Istead Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area; there would be no harm caused to residential amenities; and that the development was acceptable in terms of highway impact, access, and parking. It was noted that a contamination assessment would need to be conditioned, should planning permission be forthcoming. No objection was raised to the principle of development in this location.

4. The Application Proposals

- 4.1 This planning application seeks permission for the erection of a pair of semi-detached (1 x three-bedroom and 1 x four-bedroom), dwellinghouses together with associated parking; following demolition of the existing barn. This is proposed as an alternative to the extant prior approval for the change of use and conversion of the existing barn into two dwellings, under LPA reference 2021 1026.
- 4.2 The design, scale, siting, and external finish of the proposed dwellings has been directly influenced by the height, scale, siting, materiality and proportions of the existing barn and consented development; and is also responsive to the wider context of the site, including the Green Belt designation and the issue of openness.
- 4.3 Like the existing barn, the proposed development is located towards the western side of the site, with the same alignment and footprint. The proposed dwelling is shown to be located c. 2m further to the south and 2m further to the east to bring the proposed dwellings in a little further away from the road than the existing barn – illustrated by **figure 5** below.

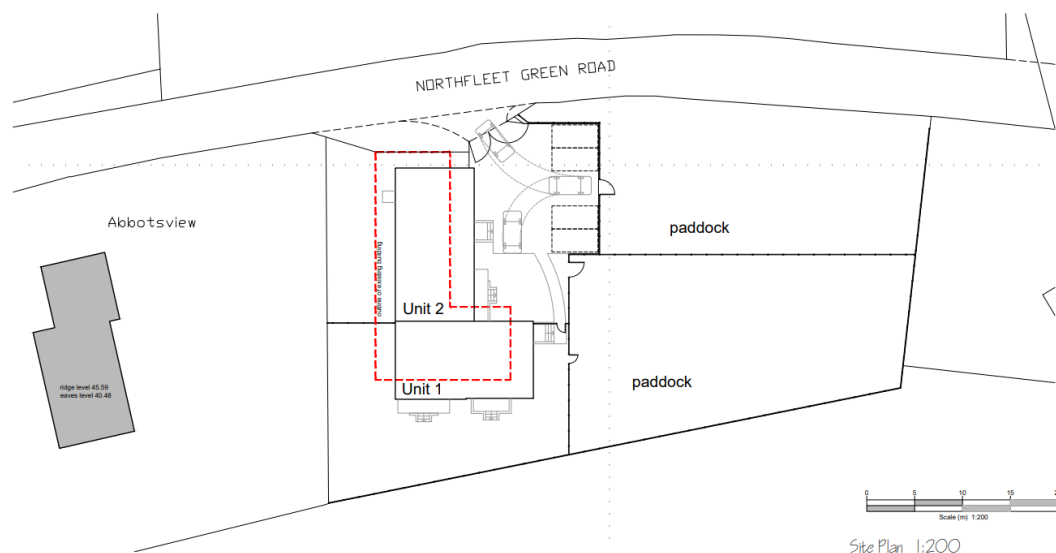


Figure 5: Comparison of Existing (red dotted outline) and Proposed Siting of Development [Drawing 21.035.18]

- 4.4 The gross *internal* area [GIA] of the existing barn (ground floor only) is c.224sqm and the GIA of the proposed building is c.227sqm (ground floor only). The *external* footprint of the existing barn is 232.5sqm and the external footprint of the proposed building is 248.4sqm. Whilst seeking to retain the same internal ground floor area as the extant class Q prior approval, the increase in the external footprint comes solely from the thicker insulated walls of the proposed new build dwelling.
- 4.5 As with the Class Q scheme, the proposed building has an L-shape floor plan and provides accommodation over two floors. The ground/slab level of the proposed dwelling is proposed to be lowered by c.0.6m compared to the existing barn. Adjacent ground levels to the building are to be maintained at similar levels as existing, apart from the entrance and parking areas which are to be graded down to the road entrance to allow an easier transition from the road to the driveway and parking area [drawing 21.035.13A]. The height of the proposed building relative to the adjacent property of Abbotsview and within the wider context would be the same, if not marginally lower than, the main apex of the existing barn – see **figure 6**.



Figure 6: Comparison Street Elevation To Northfleet Green Road [proposed development (top), existing barn (bottom)]

- 4.6 The proposed building is shown to have a hipped roof facing towards the highway (rather than a gable as existing), which continues across at the same height as the main ridge of the existing barn. The roof over this section of the building is maintained at 30degrees to keep to that of the original barn. The southern section of the roof steps down to a lower roof section – over what would have been the mono-pitch roof of the brick section of the original barn. The difference between the two schemes is illustrated by drawing 21.035.17.A – see **figure 6**.
- 4.7 The proposed materials to the external finish comprise a sympathetic palette with natural finishes and muted tones. The key elements comprise: **Natural Slate** for the roof; walls are to be part **brick** and part **timber cladding**. The brick bond is to be Flemish to match the original building. Windows are to be double glazed, dark stained timber frame with brick arch soldier course over the ground floor openings. The design and materiality cues taken from the original barn, which together with the modest scale and discrete siting of the proposed building will ensure that the finished development will be ‘read’ as part of the existing pattern of development and is an appropriate response to the wider context of the site, including the countryside which extends from the site boundary to the south and east.
- 4.8 The proposed development presents an opportunity to allow improvements in the energy performance of the building, particularly in terms of thermal capacity vis a vis the extant class Q development. Photovoltaic panels are proposed on the southern roof slop of unit 1 and the western slope of unit 2. Air source heat pumps are the proposed heating system for the development. Further details are provided within the submitted Sustainability Statement.
- 4.9 The external areas to the proposed dwellings are to be landscaped, with the private curtilages discretely located to the west and in part to the south of the proposed building. Pulling the building back away from the road enabled scope for enhanced planting along the site frontage (north side of building) which continues as a new native species hedge along the western, southern, and eastern margins of the site. Species to include hazel, Hawthorne, spindle, holly, and dog rose. The frontage planting along the

5. The Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The Local Planning Authority will be aware that Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that where regard is to be had to the Development Plan, for the purposes of determining planning applications, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless other material considerations indicate that those policies can be set aside. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) will also provide for a material consideration in the assessment of this proposal.
- 5.2 The weighting of the planning policy framework attributable to the balanced assessment of this application is considered further within **Section 6** below. The following outlines the policy framework in isolation of this.
- 5.3 Gravesham's Development Plan comprises the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and the 'saved policies' of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994).
- 5.4 The relevant development plan policies are identified within the evaluation of planning issues below and these have informed the consideration of the Site's potential for residential development below.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2004)

- 5.5 **Policy CS01** sets out the Council's commitment to take a positive approach to development proposals which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF and the Core Strategy. The Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and secure development that improves the economic, social, and environmental conditions in the area. The policy recognises that where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – in line with NPPF paragraph 11.
- 5.6 **Policy CS02** seeks to retain and improve the existing stock of housing to make provision for the Borough's objectively assessed housing need. The policy prioritises the location of new development towards the urban areas and opportunity areas within the Borough. In the rural areas, development within the Green Belt, will be supported where it is compatible with national and local policies for protecting the Green Belt.
- 5.7 **Policy CS11** requires new development to mitigate impact on the highway and public transport network as required. Sufficient parking should be provided in new development in accordance with parking standards which reflect the availability of alternative means of transport and accessibility to services and facilities.
- 5.8 **Policy CS12** seeks to enable a multifunctional linked network of greenspaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife stepping stones and corridors. Opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create, and maintain habitats will be sought within new development. The overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored, and enhanced.
- 5.9 **Policy CS15** requires all new housing to be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated.

- 5.10 **Policy CS18** addresses matters relating to flood risk, water quality, drainage, water demand management, and carbon reduction. The policy gives support to proposals which lead to a reduction in carbon footprint.
- 5.11 **Policy CS19** requires all new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. Developments are expected to conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic, and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards. The design and construction of new development is expected to incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques, be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles and be resilient to the effects of climate change. The policy sets out a series of objectives/criteria relating to matters including inter alia: compatibility with neighbouring buildings and spaces, inclusivity, provision of private amenity space, hard and soft landscaping, car parking, biodiversity enhancement, delivering carbon reduction, low carbon and renewable energy, and minimising energy consumption and water use.

Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994)

- 5.12 Policy T1 requires consideration to be given to the impact of development on the transport system and on the environment of traffic generated by new development. New development must be adequately served by the highway network.
- 5.13 Policy P3 anticipates that development will make provision for adequate parking in accordance with adopted standards.

Supplementary Planning Documents & Guidelines

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (March 2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, September 2023)

- 5.14 **Paragraph 218** of the recently revised NPPF advises that the provisions of the Framework will remain a material consideration and should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. A suite of policy provisions from the Framework will apply to this development proposal and are summarised as follows.
- 5.15 **Paragraph 8** emphasises that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which remain inter-dependant and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways to secure net gains across each of different objectives.
- An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity...
 - A social objective – to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations and by fostering a well-designed, safe built environment ...
 - An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment including making effective use of land and helping to improve biodiversity...

- 5.16 **Paragraph 9** advises that the above-mentioned objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in the Framework, but they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged.
- 5.17 **Paragraph 10** re-emphasises that at the heart of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.18 **Paragraph 11** advises that plans and decisions should apply a *presumption in favour of sustainable development*. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- “Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*
- 5.19 **Paragraph 12** goes on to advise that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan which remains the starting point for decision making but emphasises the need for the decision-making process to be considered in relation to up-to-date Development Plans.
- 5.20 **Section 4** provides the Government’s policy advice with regard to ‘decision-making’. Local Planning Authorities are advised to approach decision-making in a positive and creative way and decision makers, at every level, should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 5.26 In considering the application determination process, **Paragraph 47** re-emphasises that planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.21 **Section 5** is concerned with the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes. The Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes is reiterated at **Paragraph 60**.
- 5.22 **Paragraphs 78-80** discuss the issue of ‘rural housing’. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local need. Encouragement is given (**Paragraph 79**), to locate housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive especially where this will support local services. **Paragraph 80** advises that planning decisions should avoid isolated houses in the countryside unless meeting one or more criteria.
- 5.23 **Section 6** sets out the Government’s policy advice in relation to the contribution that planning makes to building a strong, competitive economy. The provision of housing where this would seek to address potential barriers to investment is encouraged at **Paragraph 82**.
- 5.24 **Paragraph 105** advises that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of the Framework’s transportation objectives with significant development focused on locations which

are, or can be made, sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. **Paragraph 105** goes on to advise that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account in both plan making and decision taking.

- 5.25 At Section 12 'achieving well-designed places', **Paragraph 126** advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should create better places in which to live and work and help make development acceptable to communities.
- 5.26 Planning policies and decisions are encouraged, at **Paragraph 130**, to ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping. Developments should also be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and should establish or maintain a strong sense of place.
- 5.27 **Section 13** of the NPPF address matters relating to development within the Green Belt. **Paragraph 137** states that the Government places great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. This is reinforced by the five 'purposes' of Green Belts at **paragraph 138**.
- 5.28 **Paragraph 147** states that 'inappropriate development' is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (**paragraph 148**).
- 5.29 LPA should regard the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate, although exceptions to this are identified by **paragraph 149**. These include, *inter alia*, the extension or alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building **(c)**; the replacement of a building, provided that the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces **(d)**; and, the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use, which would i) not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development **(g)**
- 5.30 Policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment are contained at Section 15 where the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status) is promoted. **Paragraph 179** encourages Local Plans to promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and to identify, and pursue, opportunities for biodiversity.

Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Gravesham Local Plan

- 5.31 The LPA are in the process of producing a new Local Plan to update the policies that guide local development decisions into the future. The Council have consulted at Regulation 18 stages 1 and 2 on a Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document which, subject to a further stage of public consultation and Examination in Public, will set out the planning framework for the borough until 2037.

- 5.32 Given the early stages of the Local Plan Review process, it is submitted that the draft policies do not carry material weight in decision making at this time.

6. Relevant Issues and Planning Merits

6.1 With reference to the planning policy framework, it is submitted that the principal issues relevant to the determination of this application will be:

- The principle of the development in this location – considering the absence of the requisite housing land supply, the out-dated policies relating to housing development;
- The materiality of the *fallback* position for residential development established through the extant Class Q prior approval.
- The impact of the proposal on the objectives of the Green Belt
- Other technical considerations.

The Principle of Development

6.2 In accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and as confirmed at paragraphs 2 and 12 of the NPPF, planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.3 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental and to achieve sustainable development, economic, social, and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

6.4 The policy instrument for applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out in Paragraph 11 which states that for ‘decision-taking’ this means:

*“d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the **policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date**, granting permission unless:*

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or,*
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

(emphasis added)

6.5 It is common ground with the LPA that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The Council published a revised 5-year housing land supply statement in March 2023, which demonstrates that based on data for the period 2022-2027, the Council can demonstrate a land supply of only 2.9 years. Given the Council’s current inability to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, and as the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75%) that required by the Housing Delivery Test, the housing delivery element of Gravesham’s Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) Policy CS02 must be regarded to be out of date, as required by the Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF (2023).

6.6 Those policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance referred to by NPPF paragraph 11d(i) relate to, inter alia, Green Belt and Habitat Sites (discussed below).

- 6.7 Within the above context, and as confirmed through the pre-application advice received, it is common ground that in determining applications for planning permission involving housing, the Council will therefore apply a weighted balance in favour of granting planning permission in accordance with relevant case law and guidance, having regard to the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals when evaluated against development plan policy, the need to make efficient use of land, the relative contribution the proposal makes towards the alleviation in any shortfall in housing delivery at that time and any other considerations material to the proposed development.
- 6.8 The NPPF addresses rural housing at Paragraphs 75-80 wherein it states that planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local need. Encouragement is given to locate housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive especially where this will support local services. It is asserted that the proposed dwellings would positively contribute to the local rural community within which they would be located, enabling proportionate and sustainable growth.
- 6.9 NPPF paragraph 80 seeks to resist isolated dwellings in the countryside unless meeting the exemption criteria listed therein. The LPA will be aware of the relevance of ‘Braintree’² in the assessment of such matters. In summary, the ‘Braintree Case’, as considered in the High Court, determined that a Planning Inspector at appeal had correctly assessed a proposal for new rural housing by opining that the development in question could not be considered as ‘isolated’ because *“there are a number of dwellings nearby”*. Despite the Council’s submission, in that case, that accessibility of the proposed site to services, facilities and employment opportunities would be poor, the High Court Judge in the Braintree case agreed with the Secretary of State that the word ‘isolated’ in paragraph 55 of the NPPF should be *“given its ordinary objective meaning of far away from other places, buildings or people; remote (Oxford Concise English Dictionary)”*.
- 6.10 This judgement, and the subsequent Appeal Court judgement³ drew a clear physical distinction between ‘settlements’ and ‘the countryside’. As a consequence, the NPPF was updated which both replicated, and sought to make clearer, the former provisions of NPPF Paragraph 55 as considered under ‘Braintree’ – now Paragraph 80 in the current iteration of the NPPF. Having regard to the established caselaw and the location of the development within an established cluster of existing development within Northfleet Green Road, it is asserted that the proposal would not result in isolated dwellings in the countryside, and consequently the provisions of paragraph 80 of the Framework do not apply.
- 6.11 In this regard, it is important to reiterate the fact that the development will not provide for isolated dwellings in the countryside and, as such, it will not be appropriate for the LPA to assess the development under the provisions of NPPF Paragraph 80.⁴
- 6.12 Moreover, NPPF Paragraph 79 advises that one of the key aims of the NPPF is to ensure that policies and decisions are responsive to local circumstances and to ensure that rural communities do not stagnate:

“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to

² Braintree District Council v SSCLG & ORS [2017] EWHC and Braintree District Council v SSCLG & ORS [2018] EWCA Civ 610

³ Braintree District Council v SSCLG & ORS [2018] EWCA Civ 610

⁴ Following the judgements in *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin) and *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & ORS* [2018] EWCA Civ 610

grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.”

(NPPF, Paragraph 79)

- 6.13 The development plan policies that relate to the location of new housing are regarded as out of date for decision making purposes, the Framework does however provide that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be pursued, and patterns of growth managed accordingly.
- 6.14 The site benefits from direct connection to the local network of roads and a wide network of public rights of way (see **Appendix A**) connecting the site by sustainable means (walking and cycling). Public Rights of Way connect the site to bus services which are accessible from Red Street within c.550m of the application site, providing opportunity for bus connectivity to schools, public services, amenities, and rail connections – summarised at **paragraphs 2.7-2.9** above. Southfleet has a range of facilities and amenities including primary school, church, public house, village hall and village club.
- 6.15 Footpath NU28 leads from the bend in Northfleet Green Road to the east of the site, where it connects with a Bridleway running northwards to the A2, or southwards towards Istead Rise, putting the site within c.1.5km walk of one of the Borough’s second tier settlements which benefits from a wide range of local services and amenities. Bus stops are located within Broad Ditch Road and Flowerhill Way. *‘Istead Rise has the largest population of the rural settlements, with a total of approximately 3,400 people. It has a wide range of facilities including a primary school, a GP surgery, a community centre, a small supermarket, a number of other shops, a post office and a place of worship. It is served by bus 306/308 which runs hourly daytime services to Gravesend, and Sevenoaks.’* (paragraph 4.4 Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper Gravesham Borough June 2017).
- 6.16 In this regard, it is pertinent to note that NPPF Paragraph 105 recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be recognised by the decision-making process. It is submitted that the proposed development would constitute a sustainable form of rural development which would be appropriate to the size and character of the surrounding built form and rural community.
- 6.17 Given the assimilation of the above factors, it is the Applicants’ assertion that the proposal would accord with the promotion of sustainable development in the rural area in supporting the aims and objectives of NPPF Paragraph 79 in enhancing and/or maintaining the vitality of the rural community within which it is situated.

The Class Q ‘Fall Back’ Position as a Material Consideration

- 6.18 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that where regard is to be had to the Development Plan, for the purposes of determining planning applications, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This is reinforced by paragraphs 2 and 12 of the Framework.
- 6.19 It has been established through case law that permitted development rights (such as part Q conversions) are a material planning consideration as a ‘fallback position’ when considering alternative proposals for development of the same site. The notion of the Class Q fallback position was specifically dealt with at the Court of Appeal case, *Mansell vs Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council [2017]*.

- 6.20 This judgement has been cited by Inspectors in appeal decisions such as in a case relating to land at The Spinney in Alton. Here the Inspector comments that *‘although the prior approval process is separate to the planning application process, this judgement clarifies the principle that, in considering proposals for new development, decision-makers should have regard to the fall-back position of lawful development, which has a real prospect of taking place in the alternative. The demonstration of a real fall-back scheme being implemented does not necessarily require a permission or prior approval to have already been secured’*, (paragraph 15, of Inspector’s decision⁵).
- 6.21 Similarly, it is asserted that the extant Class Q prior approval [20211026] for the conversion of the existing barn into two dwellings is an important and significant material consideration, as it demonstrates a ‘real prospect’ of the fallback position coming forward. Furthermore, in this case prior approval has been secured, it remains extant, the contamination condition has been discharged, and the SAMMS payment has been made. These factors demonstrate a clear prospect of, and intent for, the Class Q development to come forward, in the absence of permission being granted for the current proposal.
- 6.22 The implication of the principle of a fall back, established through caselaw, is that the effect of any conflict between the development and the development plan and/or NPPF in respect of location (and indeed other factors), would be similar to the implementation of the Class Q development. This position was clarified by an appeal Inspector in an appeal relating to a site in Cranbrook, who stated that *‘as a consequence [of the fall-back position], any impacts from the appeal proposal in respect to a residential use away from services or not falling within PDL [previously developed land] would create no greater harm than the fallback permission’* (paragraph 6, of Inspector’s decision⁶).
- 6.23 Notwithstanding the assessment of the site’s sustainability in terms of location (paragraphs 6.2-6.17 above), it is submitted that the principle of residential development on this site has already been established through the extant Class Q prior approval – which is a significant material consideration, highly relevant to this proposal, a principle which has been established through caselaw and brought into accepted practice through subsequent planning decisions.
- 6.24 Furthermore, the proposed development would derive other benefits vis a vis the extant Class Q conversion by providing opportunity to provide a more sustainable and energy efficient construction; and to provide biodiversity enhancement and native planting within the site – benefits that are not afforded through the prior approval process – these elements are considered further in **section 7**.

The impact of the proposal on the objectives of the Green Belt

- 6.25 For the reasons expressed above, Development Plan Policy CS02 is regarded as out of date for decision-making purposes, it nevertheless in any case defers to section 13 of the NPPF in relation to planning policy in respect of Green Belts. The site is located within the Green Belt.
- 6.26 The Framework states that ‘inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It continues, ‘when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very Special Circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations’ (NPPF, paragraphs 147-148, our emphasis added).

⁵ Appeal Decision APP/M1710/W/20/3258256, **Appendix B**

⁶ Appeal Decision APP/M/2270/W/21/3275927, **Appendix C**

- 6.27 LPAs should regard the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate, although exceptions to this are identified by paragraph 149. These include, inter alia, the extension or alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building (c); the replacement of a building, provided that the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces (d); and, the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use, which would i) not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development (g).
- 6.28 Within the context of the above scenarios, it is asserted that the existing barn, with extant ‘fall back’ prior approval for its conversion into two dwellinghouses, with associated external alterations, is an important material consideration relevant to the assessment of the proposal in terms of Green Belt issues. It is submitted that the proposal would fall broadly within the scope of exception d) of paragraph 149. In this regard, the proposal would be in the same use as the extant class q conversion of the existing building which is a material consideration relevant to the evaluation of this proposal, in the same way that it is in relation to the location of development. It is submitted that the proposed replacement building, that occupies the same area of the site, follows the same orientation, height, scale, approximate footprint (illustrated by **figures 5 & 6**), would not cause greater harm to the openness of the Green Belt vis a vis the existing building and the Class Q conversion fall-back.
- 6.29 The alteration to the form of the roof over the southern section of the building would remain below the height of the northern section (which remains equal to that of the existing barn), and indeed would be lower than the front section (east) of the existing brick-built section of the existing barn. Drawing 21.035.18 presents a comparison overlay between the extant Class Q barn conversion and the proposed replacement building – an extract is provided below, **figure 8**. It is submitted that this would not constitute a building that is materially larger than the existing building and would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

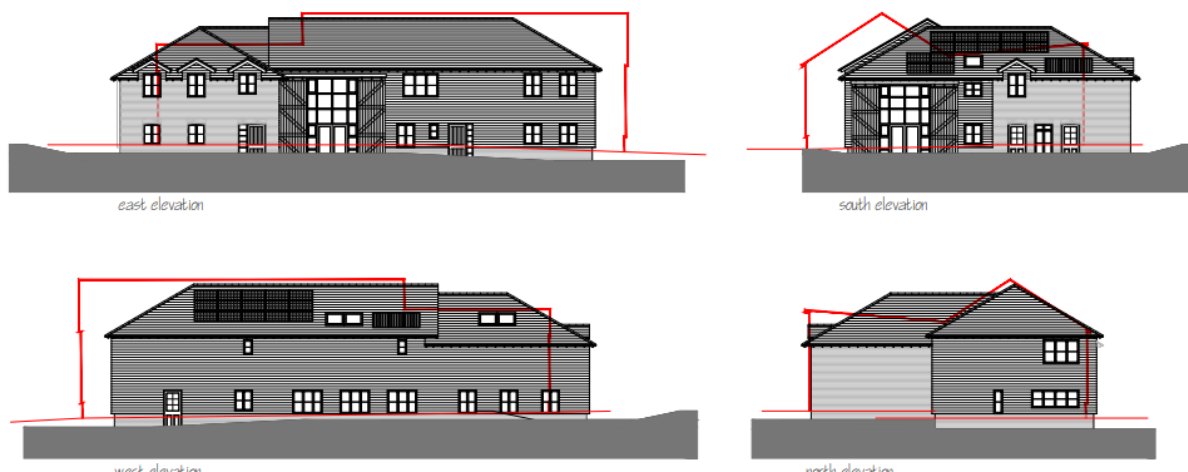


Figure 8: Overlay plans (Existing Barn outlined in red)

- 6.30 The openness of the Green Belt can be safeguarded into the future through the attachment of planning conditions to the permission that remove permitted development rights for alterations or extensions to dwellinghouses, and the erection of outbuildings and other associated development that is incidental to the enjoyment of the occupants. The modest area of private curtilage identified for each dwelling is discretely located to the rear, between the proposed building and the rear garden of Abbotsview. This will provide improved residential amenity standards for future occupants, that are more appropriate for a

family home. It is asserted that this is a betterment to the proposal in a manner that does not compromise the openness of the Green Belt.

- 6.31 Meadow and orchard planting, and other biodiversity enhancements is proposed within the site and on land to the south and east of the site [within the ownership of the applicant] to enhance the appearance and setting of the development. This can be secured by way of condition.
- 6.32 This together with the opportunity to provide a more sustainable and energy efficient construction (discussed below) are benefits that would be delivered as part of the proposed development in a manner that preserves the openness of the Green Belt, and which are benefits not afforded through the prior approval process.
- 6.33 Without prejudice to the applicant's position as set out at **paragraph 6.28** above, wherein it is asserted that the proposal does not trigger the need to demonstrate very special circumstances [VSC], even in the absence of the NPPF exception [afforded through NPPF paragraph 149 (d)], it is asserted that the extant class Q prior approval, together with the inherent benefits that the current proposal could deliver, would in any case constitute VSC that are material to the evaluation of this proposal. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 148, this 'other material consideration' which also delivers betterment to the development (landscaping, biodiversity, residential amenity, visual amenity, and sustainable construction), would outweigh any potential perceived harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Conclusion

- 6.34 With reference to the above evaluation of principal matters, policy and case law, and the following account of more site specific and/or technical matters, it is submitted that there are no policy issues that would provide clear reason for refusing the development proposal.

7. Technical Considerations

- 7.1 Having regard to the suite of both local and national policy provisions, and relevant caselaw relating to the principle of development, we now address other issues of relevance.

Sustainable Construction & Energy Sources

- 7.2 Core Structure Policies CS18 and CS19 seek to promote low carbon and renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, and minimise the consumption of water. A Sustainability Statement has been prepared by the Applicant's architect and supports this application. This report should be read in conjunction with the proposed plans for the development. The report identifies an opportunity to enable improvements in the energy efficiency of the replacement building and allow additional sustainable measures to be introduced to the site. These include photovoltaic panels, enhanced thermal insulation, air source heat pump and water efficiency measures. Please refer to the Sustainability Statement for further information.
- 7.3 Addressing the matter of thermal efficiency, the Sustainability Statement comments that, whilst the Class Q prior approval allows for insulation to be provided to the inside of the external walls, this would be limited, and measures to try to improve air leakage from the building to a high standard would be limited to that achievable through a conversion. The modern construction of the proposed replacement building provides opportunity to greatly increase the thermal capacity of the building with improvements to both the insulation values, the air tightness of the building and to introduce other sustainable measures to improve the green credentials of the replacement building compared to that achievable through the extant class q conversion.
- 7.4 The Inspectors in both appeal examples cited within this statement (paragraphs 6.18-6.24) recognised the opportunity for improved sustainable construction through a new build development vis a vis a class q conversion. In the case of the Cranbrook decision, the Inspector commented, *'The appellant also states that it is easier to incorporate sustainable construction techniques and methodologies within a new build than to retrofit such measures into an existing agricultural building not originally designed or constructed for residential occupation ... the longer-term benefits which arise from a new building, which is required to fully comply with Building Regulations, outweigh the harm derived from demolition in this instance' (paragraph 7, of Inspectors decision?)*.
- 7.5 For the above reasons, it is asserted that the proposed development is consistent with and supported by the objectives of the Development Plan and the NPPF in supporting a high-quality, energy efficient, sustainable design - factors that weigh in favour of the proposed development.

Effect of Development on Landscape and Visual Character

- 7.6 The site is not subject to national, regional, or local landscape designations (Green Belt matters are addressed above). Notwithstanding this, the NPPF recognises the intrinsic character of the countryside. Core Strategy Policy CS12 aims to ensure that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored, and enhanced and that development proposals should take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment [LCA].
- 7.7 The application site is located within the within the Istead Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. The LCA describes the overall condition of the landscape to be poor and comments that 'may features and elements of the landscape are indistinct and ... overall there is a weak sense of place'. It continues, 'the open character of the landscape and consequential high visibility across the character area, provide a moderate level of sensitivity overall'.

- 7.8 Given the acknowledged poor condition and weak sense of place of the landscape character within this area, and the close association of the development with a cluster of existing development, essentially replacing an existing barn of similar siting, scale, and height, it is submitted that the proposed replacement building would not have an adverse impact on the landscape character. This conclusion was drawn by the case officer in their assessment of the pre-application proposal for a dwelling of greater scale and prominence within the site.
- 7.9 As described within **section 4**, the proposed development is to be set back into the site in a similar location and alignment to the existing building and approved Class Q conversion. A palette of external materials consisting of natural finishes with muted 'earth' tones has been selected by the Applicant with the objective of ensuring the new dwelling will sit 'quietly' within the site and, with enhanced soft landscaping within and around the site, will effectively meld into its surroundings. This would further ensure that the proposed development would not cause material harm to the character or appearance of the local area and would deliver visual enhancement over the existing condition of the site.

Biodiversity

- 7.10 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment [PEA] was undertaken by Marsh Environmental Ecological Consultants to determine the presence or otherwise of protected or priority habitats or species within the site. The PEA identified there is no need for further surveys in respect of bats, reptiles, or other protected species. The Applicants have opted to register under the District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme in respect of Great Crested Newts (GCN). The registration process is currently underway and confirmation will be supplied to the LPA prior to the determination of the application. The methodology, results, conclusions, and recommendations arising from the ecological work are provided within specialist reports prepared by Marsh Environmental which accompanies this planning application.
- 7.11 The report also makes recommendations for the incorporation of biodiversity enhancement measures in accordance with the objective of the NPPF (paragraph 180d) which encourages optimisation of opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments where they are integrated as part of their design to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The measures identified are reflected on the submitted plans and can be secured by condition to ensure compliance with this objective. A benefit that is not secured through the extant class q conversion.
- 7.12 The site falls within the Strategic Access Management & Monitoring Area (SAMMS). As noted in **section 4.0** above, the Applicant proposes to make a payment towards the Council's adopted Thames, Medway, and Swale Estuaries SAMMS which offers a means to mitigate the likely significant cumulative effect of additional residential development through the recreational impact on the North Kent Ramsar Sites and Special Protection Areas (including the Thames Estuary and Marshes).
- 7.13 It is however noted that the Applicant has already made a payment towards SAMMS in respect of the 2no. three-bedroom dwellings approved through the Class Q prior approval. We would like to discuss with the LPA whether this payment could be transferred to this permission (or perhaps refunded and repaid). The Council's advice is sought in this regard.

Trees

- 7.14 There are no mature trees within the main body of the site area. Existing trees along the north boundary of the site are to be retained and supplemented with additional native planting. A condition to require a planting scheme for the site is anticipated.

Access & Parking

- 7.15 The proposed dwellings will each have space for two cars which complies with KCC maximum parking standards for dwellings in this setting. Sufficient turning is shown to ensure that vehicles egress and enter the highway in a forward gear in the interests of highway safety. The development will utilise the existing vehicle access to the site and no alterations are required or proposed. It is noted that no objection was raised by the LPA with regard to parking or highway safety when considering the Class Q prior approval or subsequent pre-application enquiry.

Residential Amenity

- 7.16 The only near neighbour to the site is Abbotsview to the west which back onto the rear of the existing barn and proposed replacement building. The proposed development has no first-floor habitable room windows within the rear (west) elevation. There are only two small openings serving bathrooms which can be obscure glazed. Rooflights within this elevation are high level, affording no outlook. Given this and the separation distance achieved between buildings, it is not considered that the proposed replacement building would cause harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring occupants.
- 7.17 The dwellings have been designed to exceed the Government's Technical Housing Standards in terms of room sizes and the general standard of accommodation.
- 7.18 It is noted that table 2 of the Council's Residential Layout Guidelines provides minimum requirements for private amenity space for new dwellings. The defined curtilage within the extant class q conversion is shown by **figure 3**; however this also included the areas identified for vehicle access, and so it not strictly residential curtilage per se. Mindful of Green Belt issues in relation to openness (discussed in **section 6.0** above), the curtilage areas of the proposed dwellings have been limited to a modest and discretely located area only, seeking to achieve an appropriate balance with the need to provide a suitable level of amenity space for future occupants.
- 7.19 Overall and with reference to the relevant provisions of the Development Plan Policy CS19 and NPPF paragraph 130, the proposal will provide a safe, inclusive, adaptable, and accessible dwellings providing a high standard of amenity for future occupants.

Drainage

- 7.20 The site is not located within an area at risk of flooding (Flood Risk Zone 1), and it is the Applicants' intention to explore a sustainable solution for surface water run-off. All such details can be the subject of a condition imposed upon a planning permission and the development can, therefore, be made acceptable as a consequence, compliant with NPPF Section 15.

Contamination

- 7.21 Further to the advice received in respect of the pre-application enquiry, and with reference to the condition imposed on the prior approval decision, the Applicant anticipates that a condition would be imposed on any forthcoming planning permission requiring the submission of a contamination assessment to address the specific nature of the current proposal – alternatively reliance can be had on the contamination assessment previously supplied and approved – which concluded that the risks to human health, water resources, plants and buildings and services are considered to be low in the absence of any identifiable sources of ground contamination (LPA reference 2022 1332). A copy of the contamination report can be supplied if required.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The LPA is aware that development proposals need to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan (Section 38(6) of the Act) unless material considerations indicate that relevant provisions of the Plan should be set aside.
- 8.2 As considered above, the Council has acknowledged that relevant policies for the supply of housing, including Policy CS02 are out of date – triggering the presumption in favour of sustainable development as described by Paragraph 11d of the NPPF.
- 8.3 With reference to the connectivity of the site to higher order settlements by an extensive network of public rights of way, giving access to bus connections and local services and amenities, together with the close association of the site to existing residential development, it is submitted that the site occupies a sustainable rural location – having regard to NPPF paragraph 105.
- 8.4 Moreover, the principle of residential development in this location has already been established through the extant Class Q prior approval – having regard to relevant case law.
- 8.5 Given the site's setting within the context of existing residential development and the landscape character of the area, the development has been designed to carefully balance all issues arising in relation to Green Belt, landscape, and visual impact wherein no harm would be caused with reference to baseline conditions. Moreover, through the use of appropriate materials and modest scale, the development will effectively assimilate into the pattern of existing development along Northfleet Green Road.
- 8.6 The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the need to consider development proposals in-line with the engagement of the 'Tilted Balance' and the presumption in favour of development. The Framework advises that 'sustainable development' has three objectives that must be considered together; these being (i) economic, (ii) social and (ii) environmental.
- 8.7 In meeting the **Economic Objective**, the provision of two high-quality family dwellings will assist the Council in supporting local economic growth in the District. The proposal will provide for a small addition to the housing land supply for the Borough generating additional finance to the Local Authority through Council Tax charges and the new homes bonus; and would bring benefits to the local economy from increased local spending by the new residents.
- 8.8 The development will meet with the **Social Objective** in meeting the needs of existing and future generations and providing 'housing choice' as promoted by the NPPF. With reference to the fallback position, it has been demonstrated that the development will not give rise to adverse impacts, or effects, upon the character and appearance of the landscape, Green Belt, or the wider area. In addition, the scale, design, and siting of the development will not give rise to any harmful impacts upon neighbouring property occupiers.
- 8.9 The proposed development will be built using a high standard of energy efficient construction techniques materials, methods, and energy sources, and ensuring that enhancements to the biodiversity interests of the area are secured, this represents betterment relative to the development of the Class Q prior approval - the proposal will meet with the **Environmental Objectives** of the NPPF.

- 8.10 With reference to the evaluation of principal matters, and more site specific and/or technical matters that have been addressed through this report, it is submitted that there are no policies or other material considerations that would provide clear reason for resisting the proposed development. On behalf of the Applicants, Rebus Planning Solutions respectfully request that favourable consideration is afforded to this application.

List of Appendices

Appendix A | KCC Public Rights of Way Map

Appendix B | Appeal Decision, Land at the Spinney, Alton

Appendix C | Appeal Decision, Broadlakes, Cranbrook